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AUTHOR Garrison, Bruce
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the images of the media held by members of a state legislature. Specifically, it examined the legislators' perceptions of differences in print and broadcast news media performance, and differences in coverage of the legislature in the home district and on a statewide level. Questionnaires containing demographic questions and four sets of scales to measure the various aspects of media performance were mailed to the 33 members of the senate and 99 members of the assembly in Wisconsin. Sixty-nine members responded. Results showed that the legislators did perceive significant differences in broadcast and print media coverage, rating television and radio more favorably than newspapers for both home district and statewide coverage. They did not perceive home district coverage more positively than statewide coverage of the legislature for either type of media. (FL)

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STATEHOUSE REPORTING OF A LEGISLATIVE SESSION: SOURCE PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS MEDIA PERFORMANCE

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By Bruce Garrison
Department of Communication
University of Miami
P.O. Box 248127
Coral Gables, Florida 33124

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STATEHOUSE REPORTING OF A LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

SOURCE PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS MEDIA PERFORMANCE

Journalists covering state government often take the opportunity to criticize the efforts of politicians--- in commentaries, analyses, columns, and in the objective reporting that they produce each day. Certainly those government officials at the state level, estimated by some to be the least salient level of government to the public than other levels,[1] have opinions about the quality of work of the news media in covering these sources. A recent study by the staff of Michigan Gov. William G. Millikan, released by the National Governor's Association in Washington, illustrates this. This report, reflecting the opinions of 48 governors, stated the news media did a "B" job in covering their various states.[2]

If the news media are not doing the best possible job according to those the news media cover, they must strive to better understand what sources think about news media performance and news media institutions in general. What are the images public officials hold toward news media reporting performance? Whether it is covering the chief executive, the legislature, or the supreme court, the job is not an easy one.

It is clearly not an easy task as Whitehead and Ziff indicate,[3] and, from the research literature, we know much more about the news media's perceptions of sources and news media behavior in general in covering government. Textbooks on reporting, for example, focus on how-to-do-it rather than understanding sources and source perceptions of news media purpose and performance. Researchers have studied the major daily newspapers, the news magazines, and the television and radio networks. And they have concentrated on the public's reactions to coverage, impressions regarding performance, and such similar matters. Little recent scholarly concern has been given to state government and news media performance

in covering state government. Furthermore, research tends to focus on public perceptions of news media performance and not on the perceptions of the primary sources of state government news--- public officials in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. While the governor and supreme court of a given state are important news sources and the governor is the leading individual news source in the state, certainly the single largest group of sources in influential positions is the state legislature. Some political scientists believe these representatives are the state's ombudsmen, reaching into the hinterlands to serve the electorate.[4] The legislature, therefore, is an important group of news sources and even more important as appropriate evaluators of performance of the news media coverage of state government.

The body of literature that concerns itself with news media performance in covering state government is growing. Dunn, for example, demonstrated the relationship of the public official and the news media in listing the major components of the public official-reporter communication dyad. Each component, Dunn concluded, must be interrelated with all components on both sides of the dyad. For political reporters, Dunn's five components are: (1) role views, (2) defining news, (3) gathering news in terms of routines and interaction with officials, (4) selecting news, and (5) writing news. On the other side of the source's desk the four components for public officials are: (1) views toward the press, (2) exposure to the press, (3) receiving communication, and (4) transmitting communication techniques and purposes.[5] Public officials' images of the press, a vital mitigating factor in the interrelationships of source and reporter, will be studied here. Dunn further explains public officials' perceptions of job performance in terms of criticism and praise. Criticisms, Dunn offers, are usually grounded in public officials' own instrumental orientations toward the press. They include improper news emphasis and selection, lack of

experience of statehouse reporters, lack of technical knowledge of public officials' areas of administration and/or government, editorials written by isolated editorial writers who have improper information, and a lack of in-depth stories and comprehensive interpretation of state government activity. Praise does not always come in the form of the obverse of the criticisms, he said. Praise includes the various "good" qualities of reporters such as wide range of knowledge and adaptability to situations, his or her interest in state government, and the helpfulness of the press in assisting public officials in achieving their program goals.[6]

Martin found government officials in Washington to be "satisfied" with the performance of the press on the whole, but this is not the case at the state level. State officials spend a good amount of their time criticizing the press, he said.[7] Research by Dunn and Morgan support Martin's general view.[8] News media and source relationships are, however, difficult to analyze because their constituent elements are not easily isolated or disentangled, Blumler and Gurevitch argue. The fusion of the source and reporter occurs because "each communicator is amply motivated to 'study' the other when pursuing his or her interests."[9] Sanders and Kaid have observed that the relationship between reporters and their political sources is characterized by most researchers as adversary in contrast to other possible paradigms such as the "exchange" model.[10]

While they are adversary, reporter-public official relationships have been viewed to pivot on communication patterns based on mutual dependence, Dyer and Nayman concluded. As this happens, each side tries to manipulate the other and alter the situation.[11] Dyer and Nayman concluded reporters and legislators have quite similar views that reporters recognize but legislators do not. With this, reporters felt "close" to legislators, but legislators did not feel close to reporters.[12] It becomes important, therefore, to study the images public

officials hold of reporters and the news media to better understand why this closeness does not exist. Miller determined the relationships between reporters and Congressmen are symbiotic, not adversarial. In her case study, she said personal friendships are no doubt important, but friends are not always available when a politician needs one in the news media. Shared understandings are perhaps more important, in other words, playing by the rules of the game. These rules, she concludes, are what allow politicians and reporters to function in symbiosis.[13] Baker and Walter, investigating the relationship of the state legislature and the news media, said the issue agendas of members of the legislature were similar to the issue agendas of coverage of the major newspapers of the state.[14]

The goal of better news media coverage is blocked by numerous obstacles. Whitehead and Ziff note several, including short staffing, internal splits within the news media between print and broadcast formats, shortages of information from sources, turnover among sources, turnover among reporters, the "ordering" of statehouse news, dependence on set spokesmen for information, and oversimplification of complex processes.[15] Weaver and Wilhoit determined visibility of a U.S. senator is based more on activity of the senator more than anything other single predictor. By comparison, activity was much more highly correlated to visibility of a senator than was seniority, state size, and committee leadership prestige.[16] Many of these factors clearly influence the perceptions of sources by news media and perceptions of news media performance by sources.

Cormley has determined that coverage of state government by television and by newspapers is not equivalent. Newspapers, he concluded, devote a larger proportion of news stories to state government than does television. Newspapers also give greater prominence to stories than television. While newspaper coverage

of state government could be better, he said, television coverage could be much better. Gormley characterized television coverage as reflecting "a policy of 'benign neglect.'" Gormley says this finding, plus the fact that television is the nation's foremost information source, leads to public opinion that state government is not very important.[17]

It is the distinction between electronic news media and print news media that is of interest here, particularly as viewed by the public official. Merwin, found television more favorably judged by legislators. He also determined television was perceived to be more responsible, reputable, wholesome, important, and safe to legislators. Newspapers, in contrast, were viewed to be biased and partial, but truthful and interesting. Merwin said the overall ratings average of television news coverage were higher than newspapers. But he cautions that the two media cannot be equated because of differences in the way television and newspapers cover state legislative news. It might be as simple as the fact that newspapers offer more material to criticize than time-tight television newscasts.[18]

Tannenbaum and McLeod studied public images of mass media institutions, determining five dimensions of consumer perceptions. They determined a general evaluation dimension which related to pleasantness of the media, its value, importance, and interest arousal capabilities. Ethical evaluation was a second dimension, including fairness, truthfulness, bias, responsibility, and accuracy. The third dimension identified was labeled stylistic evaluation, including colorfulness, excitement, freshness, neatness, and difficulty. Their fourth image dimension included potency, reflecting the power of the mass media, its boldness, and "loudness." The fifth dimension found was labeled activity, reflecting activity, tenseness, and how modern the mass media were perceived to be.[19] And, in their benchmark thesaurus study, Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum found

evaluation, potency, oriented activity, stability, tautness, receptivity, and aggressiveness dimensions.[20] The dimension reflecting stability seems particularly useful beyond those identified by Tannenbaum and McLeod when applied to news media performance.

Merwin, looking specifically at public officials' perceptions of news media performance covering state government, identified ethics, potency, style, appearance, and quality as important dimensions of images of legislative coverage of home district newspapers. He also found quality, potency, accuracy, attractiveness, and importance to be dimensions of images of legislative coverage of home district television.[21] Lemert, on the other hand, found just three components of source image in a cross-cultural study--- safety, dynamism, and qualification--- regardless of sources, scales, cultures, instructions, and situations.[22]

Research Questions

This paper explores the relationships between the news media and the public official. More specifically, this paper investigates relationships of the capitol press corps and members of a state legislature. In doing so, the principal focus is on perceptions of capitol press corps coverage held by members of a state legislature.

In a general way, this paper seeks to determine these images held of the media. To be more precise, this paper will look not only at state legislators' perceptions of news media performance, but also at legislators' perceptions of differences in print and broadcast news media performance. Furthermore, it will investigate state legislators' perceptions of differences in coverage at home district and state levels.

This paper attempts to provide answers to these research questions:

(1) What are public officials' images of (a) newspaper coverage in home district, (b) radio and television coverage in home district, (c) newspaper coverage statewide, and (d) radio and television coverage statewide?

(2) What are the similarities and/or differences in public officials' perceptions of print and broadcast news media reporting performance?

(3) What are the similarities and/or differences in public officials' perceptions of home district and statewide news media reporting performance?

Method

Tannenbaum and McLeod used semantic differential scales to determine public images of mass media institutions.[23] Following their work, scales were developed to represent their five dimensions of images held by a group of respondents: (1) general evaluation, (2) ethical evaluation, (3) stylistic evaluation, (4) potency, and (5) activity. A sixth dimension, stability, was added from Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum's early work.[24] The semantic pairs used in construction of the image scale, a questionnaire, were suggested by the two studies noted above, and by Merwin,[25] and by Lemert.[26]

A scale of 35 semantic pairs was developed, representing the dimensions proposed by Tannenbaum and McLeod. To determine differences in print and broadcast news media images held by public officials, legislators were asked to evaluate performance of newspapers and of radio and television using the semantic differential scale. Furthermore, to determine evaluations of news media performance at the home district level and the statewide level, respondents were asked to evaluate performance on these levels as well. Therefore, four evaluations were obtained on the questionnaire: (1) newspaper coverage in home legislative district, (2) newspaper coverage statewide, (3) radio and television

coverage in home legislative district, and (4) radio and television coverage statewide.

Data were collected in Wisconsin, where the state legislature consists of a 33-member senate and 99-member assembly. The size of this legislature enabled a census to be conducted rather than a sample of a larger body of legislators. Because the legislature was in recess at the time data collection began, a mail questionnaire containing the four sets of scales and demographic questions was sent to home addresses of all legislators.[27] A memorandum written by a leading member of the Assembly endorsed the study in an attempt to enhance response rate. Two follow-up mailings with personal letters were sent to legislators not responding to the original mailing. Telephone calls, when possible, were made to encourage response. Incomplete questionnaires were returned to respondents in hopes they would be completed.

Data were coded and analyzed using the t-test and factor analysis subprograms of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Each of four sets of image scales were factor analyzed utilizing the principal factoring with iteration method. Main diagonal elements of the correlation matrix were replaced with communality estimates with this procedure. The factor structure resulting from analysis served as the independent variables; each set of 35 variables (semantic pairs) served as the dependent variables. The initial factoring criterion was a 1.0 eigenvalue. Secondary factoring called for factor solutions based on overall structure of factor matrices. The iteration maximum was 25. A varimax rotation was executed on the data in each factor analysis run on this data base.[28]

Findings

A total of 52.3 percent (n=69) responded to the questionnaire. This figure represents 42.4 percent (n=14) of the Senate and 55.6 percent (n=55) of the Assembly. Of the 14 senators responding, one questionnaire (7.1 percent) was incomplete. Of the 55 Assembly members responding, three questionnaires (5.5 percent) were incomplete. Thus, 65 respondents were included in the analysis (49.2 percent).[29]

Among the respondents, 58.5 percent were Democrats, the mean age was 42.6 years, 86.2 percent were male, 41.5 percent represented urban constituencies and 40.0 percent represented urban-rural constituencies, 35.4 percent had served in the legislature for nine or more years, 20.0 percent were businessmen (the group was quite heterogeneous), and 72.3 percent had a college undergraduate or a graduate degree.

General Perceptions of News Media Performance

Means for all variables are contained in Tables 1-4. These means reveal numerous categorical differences. First of all, legislators do perceive significant differences in radio and television coverage over newspaper coverage, rating television and radio coverage more favorably than newspaper coverage. This evaluation does not seem to be influenced by the nature of coverage either, since both geographic levels of coverage of the legislature were lower for nearly all adjective pair mean scores for newspapers.

Second, there seems to be far less distinction by legislators for statewide or district coverage of newspapers or of radio and television. Legislators did perceive home district coverage more positively than statewide coverage of the legislature, but many mean score differences were not statistically significant at the p=0.05 level.

In Table 1, it is clear legislators perceive broadcast news media far more favorably at both the state and home district levels as suggested in the Texas legislature study by Merwin.[30] Senators and assemblymen felt television was more interesting, courteous, wise, active, sensitive, smooth, fair, strong, relaxed, accurate, whole, balanced, truthful, colorful, superior, friendly, and timely. Only in two cases did legislators view newspapers more positively--- unemotional and serious. While legislators viewed television and radio higher on 15 other adjective pairs, these were not statistically significant. Interestingly, legislators rated both newspapers and television-radio the same on urban-rural.

At the statewide level, legislators perceived broadcast media more positively on all but four adjective pairs, but just nine differences are statistically significant. Four adjective pairs were evaluated more positively for newspapers but none of the differences can be attributed to anything but chance. In Table 2, legislators perceived television and radio to be more courteous, fair, unbiased, relaxed, accurate, pleasant, truthful, objective, and friendly. In contrast, the four adjective pairs which were rated higher for newspapers were slight differences that were not significant.

While there were clear differences in medium, there was not such clear differentiation in the perceptions of legislators over home district and statewide reporting of their work. Generally, legislators believed coverage of their home district deserved more positive overall ratings than did state coverage. In terms of newspaper coverage, legislators viewed home district coverage more positively on 20 items and state coverage more positively on 13 items, in Table 3. However, only four of these differences were statistically significant, indicating less overall distinction. Interestingly, two of the items were higher home district ratings (unemotional and biased) and two of the items

were higher state ratings (whole and timely). The two items rated equally were rational-intuitive and stable-unstable.

Radio and television evaluations faired about the same as newspapers when studied at the district and state levels, as shown in Table 4. Legislators believed home district coverage was more positively executed, generally, but this is tentative at best since none of those higher means was statistically significant. Of the means which were higher at the state level, just one was statistically significant (attractive-unattractive).

Looking more closely at newspaper coverage in home district and statewide, legislators perceive home district reporting to be more unemotional, courteous, wise, careful, sensitive, honest, serious, fair, progressive, unbiased, right, relaxed, accurate, pleasant, balanced, truthful, subjective, sane, cautious, and friendly. Newspaper coverage statewide was perceived to be more interesting, active, urban, complete, permissive, smooth, attractive, strong, good, whole, colorful, superior, and timely. Most differences should be attributed to nothing more than chance.

Radio and television coverage in the legislators' home districts was viewed as more unemotional, courteous, wise, active, careful, sensitive, honest, smooth, fair, progressive, unbiased, right, relaxed, accurate, whole, balanced, truthful, stable, sane, cautious, and friendly. Radio and television coverage statewide was perceived to be more rational, urban, complete, permissive, serious, attractive, strong, good, pleasant, colorful, objective, and timely. Again, these differences were not statistically significant.

Dimensions of Local Newspaper Coverage

Legislators see local newspaper coverage in three distinct dimensions: ethical-evaluative, stability-evaluative, and stylistic evaluative, as shown in Table 5. These dimensions are characterized by:

(1) Ethical-Evaluative Dimension: There are 17 semantic pairs accounting for 83.6 percent of the variance which loaded on this factor--- dominated by inaccurate-accurate (.83929) and balanced-unbalanced (.79634). Other indicators of the dimension include biased-unbiased, objective-subjective, fair-unfair, and right-wrong, suggesting a strong concern for ethics and the values and decision making of journalists.

(2) Stability-Evaluative Dimension: Nine pairs comprise this dimension, dominated by the highest loading by humorous-serious (.81890) and rash-cautious (.72577). Other semantic pairs suggesting stability include foolish-wise, stable-unstable, and sane-insane.

(3) Style-Evaluative Dimension: Again, nine pairs comprise this dimension as viewed by the legislators. This is the weakest dimension, loading suggest, since the highest loaded pairs are backwards-progressive (.63754) and superior-inferior (.63116). Other stylistic pairs include attractive-unattractive, strong-weak, and smooth-rough.

Dimensions of Local Radio-Television Coverage

Three dimensions of home district radio and television coverage were detected in the analysis and listed in Table 6: ethical-evaluative, stylistic-qualitative-evaluative, and stability-evaluative. The semantic pairs comprising these dimensions were:

(1) Ethical-Evaluative Dimension: This factor contains 10 pairs accounting for 87.9 percent of the variance with good-bad highest loaded (.82117). Also loading high on this factor are balanced-unbalanced (.79155), incomplete-complete

(.76311), objective-subjective (.74327), fair-unfair (.74030), and truthful-untruthful (.70459).

(2) Stylistic-Qualitative-Evaluative Dimension: This factor contains 12 semantic pairs, dominated by colorful-colorless (.80188). Two other pairs, attractive-unattractive (.76266) and smooth-rough (.75891). Other pairs indicative of the stylistic and qualitative dominance of the dimension are interesting-boring, superior-inferior, timely-untimely, and passive-active.

(3) Stability-Evaluative Dimension: There are 13 semantic pairs in this factor. The loadings of this dimension are overall lower than the first two dimensions described, and the highest loaded pair, humorous-serious (.73140), suggests a potency element to the factor. But the factor remains clearly dominated by stability pairs such as careless-careful (.69642), rash-cautious (.68729), sane-insane (.66601), and discourteous-courteous (.51160). Evaluative pairs include foolish-wise, backwards-progressive, and right-wrong.

Dimensions of Statewide Newspaper Coverage

Three dimensions of statewide newspaper coverage identified by legislators focus on the ethical-evaluative nature of the news media, general evaluative dimension of the newspaper, and the potency of the newspaper. Specific pairs and loadings are listed in Table 7, and include:

(1) Ethical-Evaluative Dimension: Of the 21 semantic pairs accounting for 89.9 percent of the variance, the highest loadings are qualitative and ethical pairs. Strongest loading is inaccurate-accurate (.83289). Biased-unbiased (.81410), fair-unfair (.77932), and untruthful-truthful (.74218) each strongly point to the ethical element of the dimension. The qualitative element of ethics is represented by balanced-unbalanced (.80032) and there are seven evaluative

pairs on this dimension as well, with whole-partial (.79796) and honest-dishonest (.76978) loading highest among these.

(2) General Evaluative Dimension: Eleven pairs make up this dimension, headed by colorful-colorless (.76549), hinting at a stylistic element. Other higher loadings include passive-active (.73526) and timely-untimely (.71443), generally evaluative pairs.

(3) Potency Dimension: Only three pairs constitute this dimension, but two of the pairs are indicative of a potency dimension. Highest loading is humorous-serious (.74096), with urban-rural also a potency semantic pair. The third pair is rational-intuitive, adding an activity element.

Dimensions of Statewide Radio-Television Coverage

Three dimensions build legislators' images of broadcast media coverage statewide in Wisconsin: ethical-evaluative dimension, general evaluative dimension, and potency dimension, as indicated in Table 8. Here are discussions of each dimension:

(1) Ethical-Evaluative Dimension: Of all sets of dimensions, this is the largest factor with 23 semantic pairs, accounting for 92.2 percent of the variance. Of that, nearly half of the pairs (11) are ethical-evaluative semantic pairs. The highest loading is balanced-unbalanced (.80005), which Merwin described as qualitative, but contains obvious ethical implications. Ethical pairs such as fair-unfair (.79542) and inaccurate-accurate (.79293) indicate the strength of ethical considerations of this factor. Also loading high on this factor are objective-subjective (.79208), incomplete-complete (.77892), and careless-careful (.75863).

(2) General Evaluative Dimension: There are eight semantic pairs creating this dimension, dominated by colorful-colorless (.79447) and smooth-rough

(.76414). While colorful-colorless points to style, Tannenbaum and McLeod noted, smooth-rough points to receptivity, Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum have found. Three evaluative pairs are loaded on this factor as well--- backwards-progressive, unpleasant-pleasant, and interesting-boring.

(3) Potency Dimension: Three of the four semantic pairs on this factor are potency pairs, although the highest loading is an activity pair, unemotional-emotional (.72383). Others indicating potency are humorous-serious, urban-rural, and permissive-prohibitive.

Eigenvalues and variance accounted for on each set of dimensions are provided in Table 9.

Discussion

Legislators view the news media in broad similar ways, but with subtle distinctions. Legislators in Wisconsin see the news media, both print and broadcast, in many of the same images used by the public in the research by Tannenbaum and McLeod. This seems appropriate, since legislatures are demographic microcosms of the state they are elected to represent. Newspapers and radio and television are considered ethically, in terms of stability, style, and potency.

It is important to consider a point by Merwin that still seems to hold true. Merwin concluded that the nature of newspaper reporting and the nature of television and radio reporting are so different in content, depth, and format that they should be considered individually.[31] This perspective is supported here in the semantic pair mean differences.

As public officials seek to become increasingly familiar with the objectives and responsibilities of the news media, perhaps data from studies such as this will reflect a change during this decade. There has not, however, been a substantial change in the general images of the news media held by public

officials, apperently, over the past two decades in comparing these findings with Merwin and with Tannenbaum and McLeod. At this point, though, ethics remain an important dimension of news media performance in covering state government in the eyes of legislators, as does news media potency, style, quality, and stability. The image of a stable news media may be a new consideration, as it does not seem an important dimension of previous work in this area by Merwin and by Tannenbaum and McLeod.

Specifically, Merwin determined dimensions representing ethics, potency, style, appearance, quality, attractiveness, and importance. Ethics and potency stand out in all four analyses in this study, although the other dimensions are not as clear. Tannenbaum and McLeod identified public images of the mass media on five dimensions representing general evaluation, ethical evaluation, stylistic evaluation, potency, and activity. Of these, general evaluation, ethical evaluation, and potency are identifiable.

The similarities of factor solutions at the state level for newspaper coverage and for radio and television coverage is curious. This suggests the legislators see little difference, if any at all, in terms of dimensions of reporting, in the two forms of news media on a statewide level. However, the respondents do see a distinct difference in the home district news media performance by newspapers and by radio and television. At the home district level, these public officials see ethical evaluative dimensions and stability dimensions, but differences split at this point. Legislators see style of the newspaper coverage of their home districts as an important dimension in the overall perceptions they hold, but do not necessarily find this same dimension for radio and television. Instead, they identify a stylistic dimension with heavy emphasis on qualitative considerations of performance.

It makes sense. Legislators are much more sensitive to their home district news media, since these publications and stations are the primary sources of information for their constituencies. Because the legislator spends more time with the editors and news directors of these news media, they are likely to be more alert to differences in local, or district, news media than they would be with statewide news media--- many newspapers and broadcast stations which they may not know as well, or at all.

Ethics is an important aspect of news media performance regardless of the level of coverage or form of coverage. And, for home district coverage of newspapers and of radio and television at least, stability--- perhaps legislators are pointing to consistency--- also becomes vital. Legislators, themselves alert to the ethical considerations of their own positions of public trust, sense this in the job performance of the news media as well.

We must investigate further to determine if the similarities of news media statewide coverage do exist. We must continue to look at the similarities in newspaper reporting performance across home district and statewide levels.

And, we must look in a similar fashion at radio and television coverage to confirm findings here. Finally, we must attempt further analysis of factor solutions here to determine if similarities found on inspection across solutions exist when quantitatively examined and tested.

FOOTNOTES

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27. Copies of the instrument are available from the author.

28. See Norman H. Nie, C. Hadlai Hull, Jean G. Jenkins, Karin Steinbrenner, and Dale H. Bent, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, second edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, N.Y., 1975, pp. 468-514. See also R. J. Rummel, Applied Factor Analysis, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1970, pp. 391-93, and see Jae-On Kim and Charles W. Mueller, "Factor Analysis: Statistical Methods and Practical Issues," Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 07-014, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, Calif., 1978, pp. 34-36.

29. Two recent studies of midwestern state legislatures indicate similar participation levels in surveys. Larson (Charles U. Larson, "The Effect of Source, Message and Channel on Legislators: A Survey of the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate," unpublished paper presented to the Political Communication Division, International Communication Association, Minneapolis, 1981), reported 38 percent response (n=87). Bybee (Carl Bybee, "The Comparative Use of Mass Vs. Interpersonal Sources of Feedback for Legislative Decision-Making," unpublished paper presented to the Political Communication Division, International Communication Association, Minneapolis, 1981), reported 49 percent response in Indiana (n=73).

30. Merwin, op. cit.

31. Merwin, op. cit., pp. 273-74.

TABLE 1

MEANS OF NEWSPAPER AND RADIO-TELEVISION ADJECTIVE PAIRS
CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION: HOME DISTRICT

Adjective Pair	Mean Newspaper	Mean Radio-Television	t-value	p-value*
Interesting-boring	4.3175	5.0159	-3.46	.001
Unemotional-emotional	3.9153	3.4237	2.06	.044
Rational-intuitive	4.1639	4.3607	-1.04	.304
Discourteous-courteous	4.6557	5.0984	-2.36	.022
Foolish-wise	4.3167	4.7333	-2.45	.017
Passive-active	4.4333	4.9000	-2.29	.026
Urban-rural	4.5167	4.5167	0.00	1.000
Careless-careful	4.2903	4.5161	-1.32	.192
Insensitive-sensitive	4.1864	4.5763	-2.49	.016
Incomplete-complete	3.4839	3.8226	-1.57	.121
Permissive-prohibitive	4.0189	4.1132	-0.49	.623
Honest-dishonest	4.9032	5.0806	-0.94	.351
Smooth-rough	4.1525	4.7119	-3.03	.004
Humorous-serious	4.5593	3.9153	3.78	.000
Attractive-unattractive	4.4426	4.6721	-1.33	.188
Fair-unfair	4.2903	4.7581	-2.61	.011
Strong-weak	3.9500	4.5333	-2.69	.009
Good-bad	4.1148	4.4918	-1.86	.068
Backwards-progressive	4.5690	4.9310	-1.97	.053
Baised-unbiased	3.7377	4.0164	-1.19	.238
Right-wrong	4.2542	4.5085	-1.59	.117
Relaxed-tense	4.1552	4.6379	-2.98	.004
Inaccurate-accurate	4.2459	4.6393	-2.31	.025
Whole-partial	3.2623	3.7377	-2.35	.022
Unpleasant-pleasant	4.4483	4.7759	-1.82	.074
Balanced-unbalanced	3.9048	4.2857	-2.17	.034
Untruthful-truthful	4.6721	5.0820	-2.73	.008
Colorful-colorless	4.1167	4.6000	-3.28	.002
Superior-inferior	3.9836	4.3443	-2.08	.042
Objective-subjective	4.0323	4.3710	-1.72	.090
Stable-unstable	4.5345	4.5690	-0.22	.825
Sane-insane	4.9492	5.0847	-1.13	.261
Rash-cautious	4.4407	4.5593	-0.62	.539
Unfriendly-friendly	4.5167	4.9333	-2.47	.016
Timely-untimely	4.4262	5.1803	-4.45	.000

*Two-tail probability.

TABLE 2

MEANS OF NEWSPAPER AND RADIO-TELEVISION ADJECTIVE PAIRS
CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION: STATE OF WISCONSIN

Adjective Pair	Mean Newspaper	Mean Radio-Television	t-value	p-value*
Interesting-boring	4.7627	5.0508	-1.35	.183
Emotional-unemotional	3.4035	3.1930	1.13	.265
Rational-intuitive	4.2500	4.5893	-1.53	.131
Discourteous-courteous	4.2807	4.8070	-2.61	.012
Foolish-wise	4.2456	4.5439	-1.67	.101
Passive-active	4.8421	4.8596	-0.08	.939
Urban-rural	4.5965	4.6140	-0.16	.874
Careless-careful	4.2632	4.4386	-0.87	.389
Insensitive-sensitive	4.0351	4.2982	-1.37	.175
Incomplete-complete	4.0000	4.0536	-0.23	.818
Permissive-prohibitive	4.1321	4.1887	-0.50	.617
Honest-dishonest	4.6207	4.8103	-1.13	.263
Smooth-rough	4.5357	4.6607	-0.72	.478
Humorous-serious	4.1228	4.0000	0.61	.545
Strong-weak	4.3393	4.6071	-1.37	.175
Good-bad	4.2456	4.5614	-1.68	.098
Attractive-unattractive	4.6786	4.9821	-1.80	.078
Fair-unfair	4.1786	4.6071	-2.17	.034
Backwards-progressive	4.5273	4.8000	-1.51	.137
Biased-unbiased	3.2321	3.9643	-3.89	.000
Right-wrong	4.1579	4.4737	-1.76	.083
Relaxed-tense	4.1786	4.5714	-2.66	.010
Inaccurate-accurate	4.1228	4.5614	-2.34	.023
Whole-partial	3.9298	3.7193	0.79	.436
Unpleasant-pleasant	4.3091	4.8727	-3.63	.001
Balanced-unbalanced	3.9649	4.1579	-1.09	.282
Untruthful-truthful	4.4286	4.9286	-3.37	.001
Colorful-colorless	4.3393	4.6964	-1.54	.128
Superior-inferior	4.1053	4.3158	-1.02	.311
Objective-subjective	3.9286	4.3929	-2.37	.021
Stable-unstable	4.5357	4.5000	0.22	.827
Sane-insane	4.8364	4.8545	-0.17	.868
Rash-cautious	4.1818	4.3636	-1.30	.199
Unfriendly-friendly	4.2143	4.6964	-3.35	.001
Timely-untimely	5.1250	5.4286	-1.93	.058

*Two-tail probability.

TABLE 3

MEANS OF HOME DISTRICT AND STATE OF WISCONSIN
CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION: NEWSPAPERS

Adjective Pair	Mean Home District	Mean State of Wisconsin	t-value	p-value*
Interesting-boring	4.3443	4.7705	-1.88	.066
Unemotional-emotional	3.9492	3.3729	2.08	.042
Rational-intuitive	4.2241	4.2241	0.00	1.000
Discourteous-courteous	4.6667	4.3167	1.46	.150
Foolish-wise	4.3559	4.2542	0.61	.545
Passive-active	4.5263	4.8070	-1.05	.298
Urban-rural	4.5500	4.6167	-0.23	.821
Careless-careful	4.3667	4.2167	0.71	.480
Insensitive-sensitive	4.2069	4.0345	0.89	.378
Incomplete-complete	3.5667	3.9167	-1.44	.156
Permissive-prohibitive	4.0000	4.1538	-0.74	.463
Honest-dishonest	4.8500	4.5667	1.49	.142
Smooth-rough	4.1724	4.5172	-1.72	.091
Humorous-serious	4.5345	4.1724	1.68	.098
Attractive-unattractive	4.4828	4.6379	-0.88	.384
Fair-unfair	4.3448	4.1379	0.91	.368
Strong-weak	3.9661	4.2712	-1.32	.192
Good-bad	4.1525	4.2203	-0.32	.750
Backwards-progressive	4.5614	4.5088	0.25	.806
Biased-unbiased	3.7797	3.2881	2.62	.011
Right-wrong	4.2542	4.1525	0.62	.536
Relaxed-tense	4.1724	4.1552	0.11	.917
Inaccurate-accurate	4.2787	4.1311	0.90	.370
Whole-partial	3.3390	3.8814	-2.46	.017
Unpleasant-pleasant	4.5263	4.3158	1.30	.198
Balanced-unbalanced	3.9333	3.9167	0.10	.921
Untruthful-truthful	4.6441	4.3898	1.65	.104
Colorful-colorless	4.1356	4.3220	-0.90	.372
Superior-inferior	4.0172	4.1034	-0.39	.695
Objective-subjective	4.0172	3.9138	0.54	.591
Stable-unstable	4.5439	4.5439	0.00	1.000
Sane-insane	4.9138	4.7931	0.98	.331
Rash-cautious	4.3793	4.1897	1.16	.252
Unfriendly-friendly	4.4746	4.2373	1.08	.287
Timely-untimely	4.4237	5.0339	-2.62	.011

*Two-tail probability.

TABLE 4

MEANS OF HOME DISTRICT AND STATE OF WISCONSIN
CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION: RADIO AND TELEVISION

Adjective Pair	Mean Home District	Mean State of Wisconsin	t-value	p-value
Interesting-boring	5.0517	5.0517	0.00	1.000
Unemotional-emotional	3.4909	3.2182	1.40	.168
Rational-intuitive	4.4364	4.5818	-0.67	.504
Discourteous-courteous	5.1250	4.8214	1.64	.107
Foolish-wise	4.7679	4.5357	1.54	.129
Passive-active	4.9464	4.8571	0.57	.573
Urban-rural	4.5000	4.5893	-0.34	.733
Careless-careful	4.6429	4.4286	1.47	.147
Insensitive-sensitive	4.5536	4.2857	1.72	.092
Incomplete-complete	3.8545	4.0364	-0.75	.459
Permissive-prohibitive	4.0962	4.2115	-0.85	.401
Honest-dishonest	5.0175	4.8070	1.39	.171
Smooth-rough	4.7273	4.6545	0.48	.632
Humorous-serious	3.9107	4.0179	-0.77	.444
Attractive-unattractive	4.6607	4.9643	-2.49	.016
Fair-unfair	4.7857	4.6250	1.05	.296
Strong-weak	4.5273	4.6182	-0.47	.642
Good-bad	4.5357	4.5714	-0.20	.839
Backwards-progressive	4.8704	4.7963	0.53	.598
Baised-unbiased	4.1455	3.9636	0.88	.382
Right-wrong	4.5273	4.5091	0.15	.880
Relaxed-tense	4.6182	4.5636	0.41	.684
Inaccurate-accurate	4.6250	4.5536	0.50	.621
Whole-partial	3.7857	3.6964	0.36	.717
Unpleasant-pleasant	4.7963	4.8333	-0.23	.821
Balanced-unbalanced	4.3036	4.1429	0.91	.366
Untruthful-truthful	5.1091	4.9273	1.37	.176
Colorful-colorless	4.6364	4.7091	-0.37	.712
Superior-inferior	4.3036	4.3036	0.00	1.000
Objective-subjective	4.3393	4.4107	-0.43	.670
Stable-unstable	4.5636	4.5091	0.40	.690
Sane-insane	5.1111	4.8519	1.79	.080
Rash-cautious	4.4815	4.3704	0.67	.507
Unfriendly-friendly	4.8909	4.6909	1.09	.282
Timely-untimely	5.1636	5.4182	-1.51	.137

*Two-tail probability.

TABLE 5

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE IN HOME DISTRICT

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Ethical-Evaluative Dimension			
Interesting-boring	.37934	-.02664	.33908
Unemotional-emotional	.36717	.26323	-.25122
Rational-intuitive	.53594	.41742	.23066
Discourteous-courteous	.62416	.47524	.10639
Careless-careful	.63449	.44309	.40702
Insensitive-sensitive	.61574	.47294	.24767
Incomplete-complete	.58218	.32820	.41125
Honest-dishonest	.66012	.17874	.05326
Fair-unfair	.75917	.15954	.22663
Good-bad	.62579	.39149	.52128
Biased-unbiased	.75980	.21126	.05618
Right-wrong	.74147	.28774	.23660
Inaccurate-accurate	.83929	.29069	.15565
Whole-partial	.56283	.44264	.24024
Unpleasant-pleasant	.61088	.32378	.43998
Balanced-unbalanced	.79634	.22517	.06337
Objective-subjective	.74653	.31939	.14314
Stability-Evaluative Dimension			
Foolish-wise	.46087	.67161	.35929
Permissive-prohibitive	.01219	.58385	.25367
Humorous-serious	.19889	.81890	.01343
Relaxed-tense	.23155	.66606	.10641
Untruthful-truthful	.57116	.62515	.15035
Stable-unstable	.42010	.65688	.35701
Sane-insane	.40887	.65649	.39185
Rash-cautious	.35105	.72577	.19572
Unfriendly-friendly	.41173	.57235	.28141

TABLE 5 CONTINUED

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE IN HOME DISTRICT

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Style-Evaluative Dimension			
Passive-active	.36729	.25171	.46962
Urban-rural	.11229	-.00332	.44797
Smooth-rough	.41073	.53403	.56326
Attractive-unattractive	.35776	.44123	.60716
Strong-weak	.46011	.40288	.60086
Backwards-progressive	.33949	.50211	.63754
Superior-inferior	.61431	.20047	.63116
Timely-untimely	.25677	.47137	.56692

Reordered varimax rotated factor matrix.

TABLE 6

TELEVISION-RADIO COVERAGE HOME DISTRICT

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Ethical-Evaluative Dimension			
Emotional-unemotional	.25827	-.07062	.09954
Incomplete-complete	.76311	.27673	.18435
Honest-dishonest	.63256	.30182	.22268
Fair-unfair	.74030	.27057	.35134
Good-bad	.82117	.39811	.29145
Whole-partial	.58053	.34383	.38001
Balanced-unbalanced	.79155	.27984	.27699
Untruthful-truthful	.70459	.29915	.46231
Objective-subjective	.74327	.32476	.20391
Unfriendly-friendly	.51180	.40724	.47786
Stylistic-Qualitative-Evaluative Dimension			
Interesting-boring	.42972	.60373	.08185
Rational-intuitive	.49647	.54522	.27163
Passive-active	.41127	.59797	.35600
Urban-rural	-.09359	.29200	.21411
Smooth-rough	.23314	.75891	.39154
Attractive-unattractive	.25483	.76266	.44198
Strong-weak	.49931	.57240	.44576
Unpleasant-pleasant	.33717	.51450	.46593
Colorful-colorless	.28006	.80188	.23051
Superior-inferior	.63552	.64588	.26149
Stable-unstable	.46560	.54179	.52125
Timely-untimely	.44776	.61871	.15708

TABLE 6 CONTINUED

TELEVISION-RADIO COVERAGE HOME DISTRICT

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Stability-Evaluative Dimension			
Discourteous-courteous	.48765	.31565	.51160
Foolish-wise	.46512	.41583	.66802
Careless-careful	.47312	.37832	.69642
Insensitive-sensitive	.46416	.40013	.66224
Permissive-prohibitive	.15402	.47014	.47665
Humorous-serious	.13793	.04463	.73141
Backwards-progressive	.37256	.54274	.61607
Biased-unbiased	.32298	.23585	.55698
Right-wrong	.45589	.48830	.60224
Relaxed-tense	.26337	.53413	.53459
Inaccurate-accurate	.54409	.37477	.59531
Sane-insane	.41745	.43422	.66601
Rash-cautious	.28707	.37229	.68729

Reordered varimax rotated factor matrix.

TABLE 7

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE STATEWIDE

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Ethical Evaluative Dimension			
Interesting-boring	.58389	.46269	-.00749
Rational-intuitive	.66415	.45211	.35146
Discourteous-courteous	.73405	.32797	.10372
Foolish-wise	.68538	.58226	.29043
Careless-careful	.67899	.53935	.25258
Insensitive-sensitive	.73642	.38012	.06634
Incomplete-complete	.67376	.41717	.21921
Honest-dishonest	.76978	.39922	.13552
Fair-unfair	.77932	.24996	.24093
Good-bad	.69385	.62638	.24326
Biased-unbiased	.81410	.20425	.22780
Right-wrong	.70704	.54176	.29224
Relaxed-tense	.57386	.51127	.34738
Inaccurate-accurate	.83289	.25265	.03581
Whole-partial	.79796	.38242	.11391
Balanced-unbalanced	.80032	.40689	.16030
Untruthful-truthful	.74218	.49441	.29857
Objective-subjective	.78136	.38967	.25620
Stable-unstable	.64617	.57392	.31777
Rash-cautious	.58250	.45715	.38690
Unfriendly-friendly	.69479	.45900	.27588

TABLE 7 CONTINUED

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE STATEWIDE

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
General Evaluative Dimension			
Passive-active	.21510	.73526	.34468
Permissive-prohibitive	.34351	.64225	.18982
Smooth-rough	.51687	.65010	.33546
Attractive-unattractive	.49612	.71037	.27182
Strong-weak	.57908	.64218	.13341
Backwards-progressive	.57652	.60319	.31222
Unpleasant-pleasant	.58947	.59110	.25709
Colorful-colorless	.41495	.76549	.13595
Superior-inferior	.62592	.64979	.19158
Sane-insane	.54755	.61354	.40068
Timely-untimely	.46279	.71445	.33287
Potency Dimension			
Rational-intuitive	.30889	.04596	.66996
Urban-rural	-.08096	.33072	.55725
Humorous-serious	.16284	.25136	.74096

Reordered varimax rotated factor matrix.

TABLE 8

TELEVISION-RADIO COVERAGE STATEWIDE

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Ethical Evaluative Dimension			
Rational-intuitive	.58748	.52451	.32477
Discourteous-courteous	.68366	.45436	.43524
Foolish-wise	.72596	.56218	.24561
Careless-careful	.75863	.46161	.30578
Insensitive-sensitive	.71753	.41829	.36646
Incomplete-complete	.77982	.40305	.14902
Honest-dishonest	.69219	.37509	.43178
Fair-unfair	.79542	.39416	.36264
Strong-weak	.67285	.63201	.11118
Good-bad	.74227	.56793	.21842
Biased-unbiased	.69336	.26360	.38956
Right-wrong	.71516	.53094	.30863
Relaxed-tense	.50788	.48382	.46772
Inaccurate-accurate	.79293	.42580	.32110
Whole-partial	.69979	.38308	.14269
Balanced-unbalanced	.80005	.28944	.34269
Untruthful-truthful	.73856	.44147	.38971
Superior-inferior	.75334	.57853	.17079
Objective-subjective	.79208	.42992	.24485
Stable-unstable	.60841	.52337	.41263
Sane-insane	.55116	.50917	.47192
Rash-cautious	.61286	.43431	.39294
Unfriendly-friendly	.66549	.43315	.46153

TABLE 8 CONTINUED

TELEVISION-RADIO COVERAGE STATEWIDE

Factor/Semantic Pair	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
General Evaluative Dimension			
Interesting-boring	.42739	.58839	.20061
Passive-active	.39582	.67687	.22892
Smooth-rough	.49360	.76414	.20969
Attractive-unattractive	.51083	.72020	.31949
Backwards-progressive	.55961	.64194	.32140
Unpleasant-pleasant	.58403	.59592	.41057
Colorful-colorless	.36502	.79447	.22491
Timely-untimely	.49404	.70390	.35740
Potency Dimension			
Unemotional-emotional	.10779	.11313	.72383
Urban-rural	.13237	.52071	.55948
Permissive-prohibitive	.39724	.44628	.52606
Humorous-serious	.41326	.14416	.71350

Reordered varimax rotated factor matrix.

TABLE 9

FACTOR SOLUTION EIGENVALUES, VARIANCE

Factor solution		Eigenvalue	Variance
Newspaper Coverage Home District			
	Factor 1, Ethical-Evaluative Dimension	18.58675	83.6
	Factor 2, Stability-Evaluative Dimension	2.02431	9.1
	Factor 3, Style-Evaluative Dimension	1.63366	7.3
Radio-Television Coverage Home District			
	Factor 1, Ethical-Evaluative Dimension	20.81248	87.9
	Factor 2, Stylistic-Qual.-Eval. Dimension	1.62450	6.9
	Factor 3, Stability-Evaluative Dimension	1.24342	5.2
Newspaper Coverage Statewide			
	Factor 1, Ethical-Evaluative Dimension	23.83086	89.9
	Factor 2, General Evaluative Dimension	1.73826	6.6
	Factor 3, Potency Dimension	0.93528	3.5
Radio-Television Coverage Statewide			
	Factor 1, Ethical-Evaluative Dimension	25.74453	92.2
	Factor 2, General Evaluative Dimension	1.19066	4.3
	Factor 3, Potency Dimension	0.99273	3.6